

Building Foundations for Economic Mobility

Anand Sharma: Once again, good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the Building Foundations for Economic Mobility July webinar. We are excited to have you here. We have folks joining us and popping online as we speak from across the country, and we're really excited for the session that we have planned for you today. Before we go too much further, I just wanted to take a moment to introduce myself.

My name is Anand Sharma, and I'm with the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement, which is one of the Early Childhood National Centers that's intended to help you all do the work that you're doing every day as effectively as possible. It looks like we have a number of new folks as well as some veterans of the Building Foundations for Economic Mobility webinar series, so I just wanted to take a quick moment to say a little bit about what this webinar series is trying to achieve. So understanding that the Head Start programs really play a role in supporting children not only through the direct services provided for children but also by supporting families more broadly and supporting them in terms of the economic mobility prospects that they have, we developed this webinar series, this started over a year ago, to tackle a couple different issues that families are facing. So some of these webinars had focused on building the financial capabilities of families and others had focused more on the parental employment and education aspect.

And it's that latter category that today's webinar will help to address. So at the end of the webinar, we'll say a little bit more about where you can see some of the archived material that we've developed over the past year. But if you're new to the BFEM webinar series, we welcome you and are excited that you're here. And if you're a longtime fan, thank you for coming back, and we're really happy to have you this afternoon. So for today's conversation, we'll be focusing on the topic of Partnering with Parents on their Education in Training Goals. And all of you know that Head Start and Early Head Start programs can play a really important supporting role in helping families to identify their educational goals and develop a plan for achieving them. And I just wanted to give you all a little bit of a roadmap for what we'll be doing today. In this what I'm sure will be an all too quick hour, we'll be talking with some of our colleagues at the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement who will talk about a process that has been effective in helping families to set goals specifically around education and training outcomes as well as a resource that they help to develop that you all can use in your programs with work that you're doing in partnership with families.

After that, we'll talk a little bit about some concrete strategies for goal setting, and we're really excited to have an on-the-ground perspective who will share their practice-based experience in setting goals with families to achieve better outcomes in education and employment. So we'll start out a little bit at the higher level and kind of work through to make sure that you leave with some key strategies and resources that you can use in the future.

So without further ado, I want to jump into the session, and we wanted to just take the pulse of folks out there and start with a poll. So, I'm gonna ask that folks take just a couple of seconds to respond to our poll question, which is "What percentage of your parents, meaning the parents that you're working with in your Head Start or Early Head Start program, have goals or dreams related to education and training? And take a guess if you don't have the exact number, exact percent, that's okay. If you're really not sure, that's fine too, but knowing this will give us a better sense of where folks are in this process and how prevalent these types of goals around education and training are in the work that you're doing

with families. So we'll give folks just a couple more seconds, already have a ton of responses, but again, this is just a poll question on your screen if you could just respond to this prompt. What percentage of your parents, meaning the parents that you're working with in your programs, have goals or dreams related to education and training?

And as the final responses come in, it looks like there's a good number that have that range of maybe a quarter to half their families who have dreams or goals related to education and training. Almost 40% of you are responding that maybe quarter to a half of the families or the parents that you're working with have these types of goals. And we just closed the poll, but I just want to thank all of you for participating. It's one of the ways that we like to get a sense of the kind of experience that you're bringing into this session and it also helps us to allow you different opportunities to engage. And along those lines, I just wanted to say that we have so many people that are interested in these topics that it can be difficult, I should say impossible, for us to allow all of you to talk. But there are other ways for you to get your voice into the room. So please, throughout the session, we encourage you to chat with each other, share questions for our presenters, and we'll try to reserve a little bit of time at the end of the webinar for a little bit of Q&A.

And I would encourage folks to stick around at 4 o'clock from 4:00 to 4:15, the formal presentation will end, but our presenters have been kind enough to stick around and try to engage with you via chat to answer some of those questions pointing to additional resources and help you get the most that you can out of today's session. Without further ado, I will move on to our presenters for today. So I'm very excited to introduce our first speaker Brandi Black Thacker. Brandi is the director of Training and Technical Assistance and Collaboration for the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement and has served communities as an educator, a case manager, an advocate, a director, a trainer, a technical system specialist, a consultant, pretty much any role that you could imagine, for over 14 years. And I won't go through her whole bio, she has a lot of relevant experience, but I think of particular interest to this crowd will be the fact that she has served as a Head Start director in Virginia where she was working with almost 140 children and families. And as a director of training and technical assistance, Brandi oversees the development of materials and delivery of training and technical assistance across the country. And many of you know Brandi because she has hosted her fair share of these webinars and also has been on the road quite a bit. So with that, I will turn things over to Brandi who will talk a little bit about why this topic of goal setting is so critical to Head Start and Early Head Start. Brandi?

Brandi Black Thacker: Oh, my goodness. I don't know if I can keep up with all that fanfare. Thank you so much. I am so [Inaudible] to be with you guys this afternoon. Of course, this is a topic that is near and dear to all of our hearts in Head Start and one that we could talk about for days on end because it's one of the many ways that we honor, we revere, we raise up the voice of the Head Start family, their dream, and how we really get the start in a meaningful way to see it through. So I'm really excited to spend time not only with the NCPFCE team but certainly one of our favorite folks you're going to get to hear from a little later Dr. Hogan. With that, we cannot ever, ever start any of these conversations without grounding in the Head Start Performance Standards, so we're going to put one of the citations on the screen for you. And you may already know that the family partnership process is mentioned a couple of times in the standards, but we lift this one up in particular. And I want to kind of dissect the standard language for you quickly here.

And so let's look together, you know how we do, we like to look at it word by word by word. So here is all you have, a program must implement a family partnership process. And I'd like to stop right here, you guys, because I love this language already. It's about the process and not the product. We've been saying that for a long time in Head Start and Early Head Start. We really want it to be about the experience for the family and sort of help and walk beside them towards the unpacking of their dream and then the small steps to get there. So it's about the process. And it claims the family partnership agreement and the activities described in this section that support family well-being, and you see all the good things that can encompass here, right, family safety, health, economic stability to support child learning and development, and to provide, if applicable, services and supports for children with disabilities, and to foster parental confidence and skills that promote the early learning and development of their child or children. The other part that I really think it's great to lift up here is that it's initiated as early on in the year as possible.

And we know that, right, because it's all about relationship. I like that it says as early as possible but we know to engage in this sort of back and forth like what I would call the teeter-totter, they're really getting beside the family, checking it out, assess their readiness, taking a step back. Coming back to them and saying, "Are you ready yet? Okay, I'm taking a step back." We really have to see where they are and if they're ready to be successful. And you're going to hear Dr. Richard and Dr. Hogan talk a little bit about that as we move forward. So we have to start as early as possible honoring where the family is and their readiness but continue, this is the part I hope you're excited about, as long as the family participates in the program, based on parental interest and need. As we talk to you guys across the country, we hear things like we're super good, again, not initial family partnership process, you know, started and initiated, but sometimes we'd really like to have a more concrete process for the follow up. Well, now we have it right here in the standards. And so we have not only because it's what's good, right, and exciting, to deal with hard families, to reassess, recalibrate when they, you know, when they have a small success and succeed to sort of spring from that and keep going, but now we have it right here in writing in our regulation that really supports that craving that we've all been talking about for a while. So I want to pause there because we have lots of other stuff to launch into, and I believe we're going to transition.

Anand: Thank you so much, Brandi. It's great to have that context to get started. And don't worry, folks, we'll be hearing from Brandi plenty throughout the next few minutes of our presentation. But I do want to take a moment to introduce another member of our all-star lineup for today, Dr. Guylaine Richard who serves as the director of Training and Technical Assistance Development at the National Center of Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. Dr. Richard brings 25 years of experience leading successful programs, educating and providing training and technical assistance in the field of public health, administration, and education to various national and international agencies serving at-risk populations. Dr. Richard has a lot of experience doing training with Brandi and has played a leading role in developing a great resource on goal setting that I know she's going to talk a little bit more about. So without further ado, please join me in virtually welcoming Dr. Richard.

Dr. Guylaine Richard: Good afternoon, everyone. It's really a true pleasure for me to be with you this afternoon in talking about this topic that is so close to my heart because one of the things that as a director of this program, I used to see and I used to be very interested in knowing is how those partnership agreements that, you know, staff were developing with families actually translated into what those families wanted to see and wanted to have. So I am, you know, what we're going to really

talk about this afternoon together is how do we engage the families in this process, in this goal setting process. And the way we're going to do that is really looking at a way to see how when we talk about partnership agreement is truly we're talking about two partners in our staff, the staff and the families coming together to develop something and to achieve something that the family is taking really close to their heart. So I would like to first start by highlighting, you know, one of the resources that the National Center has developed to support you with this process. Actually a lot of you may have seen it already, may have probably been using it, it's called Engaging and Goal-Setting With Families. And we actually would have it in one of our chat, you know, if you look at where you have, on the left side of your computer, if you're looking at the slide under the dialing number, you will see the resource to download, and you can really go ahead and download it by highlighting the resource. And you do that in two steps, if you click on it only, it's not going to give it to you.

And If you were to do so, you will go to another place, but you will be able to come back to us and looking at the slide, so don't be worried about doing that. But one of the steps that I would like to get you to do is not only clicking on it but go to the browse tool, you need to do that in two steps, highlight it and go to the browse tool, and therefore it will take you to the web link that will allow you to go ahead and download this resource. Actually, this resource has a lot of the information that we're going to be trying to share, you know, we're going to try to share with you this afternoon. But one of the things that I would like you to also know that, you know, you will find in there a form that we will be talking about in a few moments. But with that, let me go ahead and start talking to you about this process. So basically what we look at if you were to envision a pie where we want to take you is to look at this process as a lot of phases and some steps. So we're going to go ahead very quickly, I'm going to... I'd like to review those phases. And those phases are like, you know, the first three phases are things that all of us are doing when we are engaging with families, when we are trying to even get them to our program. The first phase is recruitment and enrollment phase.

So at that phase, you're already getting some information if not a lot of information about the families. And all of us have recruited families, have gone and enrolled them, and find out some information. The next phase, we call that second phase is the phase of family and child assessment. Every one of us have been engaged into looking at what do the families need, giving them service, giving them what they need, you know, and also getting more information about their child. So the third phase that we do have that we are embarking on when we are talking, when we are working with families is communicating with them. So the families may be communicating some information to us informally or formally. And some of them will be saying, "Oh, by the way, I want to do this, by the way." So those are what we are trying to make sure that, you know, in getting into that process is for us to understand the many sources that we already have at our fingertips when we are trying to engage with families in the partnership process. So as you can see, there is one part of the pie that we cut and we put it there. And this is what we call the phase four, which is the actual goal setting with families. You know, and I will come back to it, and that's where we're going to go ahead and look at the seven steps.

So once we get to the phase four, we're going to cut it in smaller pieces and we're going to look at steps that we take in that goal setting process. So the fifth phase is the phase of follow up and review. Usually, after we go ahead and do a partnership agreement with the families and we find out what they want to work on, what their hope, their dream is, so you know, we go ahead and we start working on it and, you know, we will see how we work on it in the goal setting in the phase four when I like to start the seven step with you. But, you know, this is an important phase because the phase of follow up and review, we

need to find out is the family really wanting to continue with that goal that we had been working on, is there progress that we are making.

So finally, the sixth and last phase is the phase of continuous program improvement. Why do we do this? The way we look at it is every [Inaudible] goals that we're doing with the families can culminate into data that the program can use to support what they're going to want to do with a set of families that they want to focus on or all families. So really those [Inaudible] goals of [Inaudible] family partnership agreement, those [Inaudible] hope and dreams that we see in each family can be the source of very valuable data.

So the program itself to make changes, adjustment that they need throughout the program when they are doing their planning. So I will go ahead and move on to, now remember, I said those six phases. Now I'm going to take phase four and I'm going to cut it into what we call the seven steps. And the seven steps are simply like, you know... The reason why we call them the Seven Ss is because we are trying to make you, kind of, memorize it faster as you do that and you're looking at this partnership because we try to do everything with an S. So if you can remember, the first S, the first step is set a goal, so that's called [Inaudible]. The second step is identify the skills, and the third one is access the strengths, examine the stressors, explore strategies, determine the support, and track progress and celebrate success. Let's try to go very quickly one by one so you can have a clear idea of what we mean. When we set a goal, this is the step, this is one of the steps that is very, very important for us to really focus on. And when we say set a goal, it is the part where we as program staff want to make sure that the goal is translating. Very, very often we go and tell a family the first time we see them, "What is your goal?" The family can look at you and say, "I don't have any." Because, you know, if you were, to the contrary, trying to start the conversation with, "What is your dream? What do you hope? What do you want to see for your child, for yourself within the time that we will be working together? I'm your partner in it. So is there a dream or hope that you have?"

And this may be even easier for the family to share with you. So what happens when we set the goals at that step is the time for us to remember, remember, you had information about recruitment, enrollment, and assessment, and communication, so you have some data, you have something that is going to be helping you, think about, "Oh, maybe that parent want to work on this." But what is going to be important is the set up of the goal is the responsibilities, the parent will tell you what they hope and dream. It's not for us, I start to say to the parent, "Oh, I see that you don't have a GED, for example, and we want you to work on your GED." And I am going to just take a quick example for you. For example, if a parent comes and tells you, "I want to be a nurse." The first thing you would see, because of the information you have about the parent not having the GED, so you may have the first reaction and say, "Oh, no, you can't. You can't be a nurse because, you know, you don't have your GED."

What do you think is going to happen? Immediately, the family is going to close up, the family is not going to want to share anything else with you, so you have cut the communication channel and you have really crushed their dream. So it's okay for the family to tell you, "Yes, I want to be a nurse," but, you know, what we're going to do then is to start with the family as a partner. Remember, the word partnership has the word partner in it. So, you know, as a partner, I'm going to tell you, "Okay, I understand that you want to be a nurse, but let's prioritize what we're going to be doing." Let's try to cut that nice dream, that big dream that you have. It may happen that we're not finished with it during the time that we're going to be working as partners during that program year, one year or two years

that you have, but we see there is we know some steps to take. So if you want to be a nurse, this is your goal, this is your dream, I'm going to put it there, but we're going to be prioritizing, we're going to cut, we're going to do some small objectives, we're going to cut it and say, for example, "Okay, we're going to tackle first, the first goal will be for us to get their GED because in order for you to be a nurse, you're going to need to go to a college and the college will require that paper.

So you see when you are working on an educational goal with families and training goals for them too, you have a chance to set the goal and to talk to them in helping them with the prioritization. The thing that we don't want our staff to do is to tell the parent, "No, you can't be a nurse. You need to have your GED." So immediately, that closes the conversation. So the second one is identify the skills. As partners, you have some skills, the family has also some skills, so you need to be sitting with each other or talking with each other and finding out what are those skills that you have, what are the capabilities that you and the family have to achieve this goal.

So in other words, I'm going to tell the family, "You know what, I am not a nurse. I'm not a nurse, so I don't know what nursing school looks like, but, you know, one of the skills that I have is to be able to go to a computer and find out some of the things that you need." So, you know, you're already telling the parent that you have something that you can contribute to the achievement of that goal. So that increases the trust that the parent has in you to help to support them in achieving that goal, and also the parent can tell you, "I study very hard. I like to study, and I have like, you know, I have testing skills that I can... I pass tests easily, so, you know, the GED is not going to be a problem for me. I'm going to pass the test in no time." So you see, all those skills, you need to be you and the parent sharing that as partners. You know, the third one, assessing the strengths, the strengths are simply the attribute, the asset you have to cope with strain or stress.

So the parent can tell you, you know, "I'm a go-getter. I can do that. I have that strength. I have enough strength. I have the thing in me that will push me." And you can say, "Myself, I am a good cheerleader. I will be cheerleading you. I have that strength. I have strength also in me to get you to not let you down. So I will be there along the way with you, whether you are in a peak or valley, we're going to do it together." So, you know, those are the strengths that you can, you know, you both need to be talking about. Stressors. What are stressors? Stressors are things, you know, all things that causes you stress and make you worry or being anxious. And you know what, this process, you know, the main thing I want to tell you, for example, if you are stressed about even the fact that you see the parent putting the goal as a nurse, and, you know, you see the GED as a challenge, this is the time you can sit down with your partner, remember, this is your partner and you can tell your partner, "You know what, the fact that, for example, you are working full time, you have two kids to be with, [Inaudible] and you want to be a nurse, that stresses me, I'm worrying about the time that you would need." And the parent can tell you, "Do not worry. This is myself, what is worrying me is the money." So therefore you know where you're going to go, I have support.

And this is where you can talk to the family and think about, like, you know, "Okay, so strategies that we will do then is find money," because the money is the stressor for the family. And you need to probably stop worrying about her having two, three... Because you have not examined everything that they had yet as support, that's why the word "support" is going to come very quickly. And that drain [Inaudible], you can already create the strategies that you need. The strategies are the actions, the method that you

will be taking together to achieve the goal. And next, you will be determining the support, the support is what they will need that you both have to be.

For example, if I don't know anything about nursing school, the health coordinator, the health manager, all the nurses in the program can have some information, so why not bring them in the conversation that you have with the families? So this is accessing your internal support as a staff yourself and also putting them, you know, in support of this family as you reach [Inaudible] the goal. For example, if this is financial support that the family needs, if you know this is the way you're going to work with your partner, finding out where is that they're giving grant, you know, where can she access money. So you see, in a way, the support doesn't have to be your internal support but it has to be also external support that you can find from other partners. And last but not least is tracking progress and celebrate successes.

One of the things that is important for us to do with the partner when we're working with that partner is asking the partner simply, "What does success look to you?" Sometimes, the nursing, she wants to be a nurse, but then she is not seeing, for us, we see a nurse as the person who already has the diploma in her hand, the minute she said that, we say the diploma. But for that person, it may be success is just, you know, that I can go to that college and fill out the application and get admitted. So when that is achieved, this is success, we need to celebrate it. So you need to let your partner know, "Oh, Success for me when you say I want to be a nurse is looking at your diploma in your hand and running, and that's why I was stressed, so I was having a lot of issues. But this is what, so we're going to mix that, we're going to take strategies, we're going to make those steps, we're going to get the support needed, and we're going to get that. So you see how this process is helping you work alongside the family with a calm attitude and with the appropriate time and everything to build a relationship, build a [Inaudible], get the families to understand that you are partnering here. You are not going to tell them what to do, what to say, or how to feel but you're going to really work beside them. So in a nutshell, this is the process that we unveiled to you.

And I'm going to be just, you know, we're encouraging you. If you have downloaded your resource, we have a worksheet, and this is just a template. Please do not see it as something that you need to do as we're recalibrating, we're doing your family partnership agreement. You can take the essence of what we're seeing here and bring it to your current family partnership agreement not to be saying, "Oh, there is a form that the Office of Head Start wants us to use." No, this is just for you to be able to see how you can have that dialogue with your partner when you're sitting with her and doing this. So I am just, you now, going to be actually talking, giving the baton to Brandi. Brandi is going to be talking to us about another way that we can really do like, you know, goal setting with families and in a very fun way. So, Brandi?

Brandi: Dr. Richard, thank you so much. I'm going to stay with the template just for one second because I'm watching at chat very closely. You all know how I love the chat. That's shocking to know, one, I love this chat because, and I know when you download your resources, Dr. Richard, mentioned to review the link that we put in the chat for you. You're going to see this template in the back of it. And it's very, very wonderful because I would call it like the teeter-totter because in that left-hand column you have what the family partner offers and those Seven Steps that Dr. Richard was walking us through. And then as the staff partner, you get to say how you contribute just like she offered sort of verbally in her remarks, and it gives you the chance to document each of those. And it's really exciting because then you've

created the space to do what you guys got excited about in chat which is talk about the success, each of the S's that success in particular seem to be pretty important because, you know, we're required to be tracking success for families.

And this is like one of the many entry points we have like into that dialogue. So, you know, this is just one of a couple of ways, and as Dr. Richard said, a consideration for you guys to think about if you really like the way it played out and you think you could use it, that's great, but certainly nothing that's prescriptive, you get to be the boss for this to work. Thank you. And always, any of our resources, you're welcome to tinker with it and edit it to make it fit for what would be, a better alignment, you know, with what you're doing in your program. I have to tell you guys, let me see, just in general chat... So first for all, thank you all for being so active with us today in the chat. We love to hear from you and learn from all the great things that you're doing. How many of you have ever done vision boarding in your program with families, maybe even some of us have done it as a staff activity to get to know not only each other but where we'd like to go even with our own professional development? And I see that some of you have them, heard of them, some folks are saying I haven't discovered them quite yet. Well, it's a little humbling because one of my very favorite folks in the whole wide world who actually taught me about vision boarding is on the line today.

Hi, Mr. Reader.

And so I want to tell you a little story about how you might consider utilizing this strategy with your families in service of goal setting. Now you all remember what we said at the top with the Performance Standards in mind, this is a process. This is the opportunity to explore, with the family, a way to uncover and unpackage their dreams. And you also heard Dr. Richard mention that sometimes we get to meet families when they might be -- She didn't say this specifically but you guys know, we need families on a whole spectrum of either very hard, difficult crisis or wonderful big celebrations. And sometimes it's really hard for us to kind of concentrate on, "I don't want to think about a goal, don't want to know about a goal, not think about a goal." So it's our job to help the families get inspired with a way to get there, right? So this is one. And I see some of you saying, I have done this, it works really well. So let me give you an example.

There was a group of folks that were coming together to do some sort of parent meeting, and it was in an area that had been, you know, really hard pressed to get families to come into the threshold of the doorway, you might have experienced that. And so they worked really hard, they did a lot of advertising, they did what we do, we bringing the food, we bring the childcare, we do the transportation, and they really wanted to make the best use of the time, you know, for parents to come in. So they arranged this experience where they had the poster board, and as you can kind of see it on the screen here, magazines, what is this, pipe cleaners, glitter glue, all those kinds of things and really set it out for the families to create what they really want their vision or their dream for their family to look like. Instructions are really just [Inaudible] on purpose. Create what you would like to see. It can be an image, it can be a word, it can be a collage, it can be a sculpture. You just create what you're moved to create. You know, one example that comes to mind to me that will never leave my brain, and it's just powerful today.

And I hope I do it the justice that it deserves. There was a mommy in the room who was doing vision boarding that very evening, and she was driven to find one thing and one thing alone, and I'm telling the story quickly today because I know we have a lot more great things to cover within 40, including Dr.

Hogan who I know is up next. This mamma in particular in the vision boarding room was focused and was motivated to find one thing and one thing alone. She was quickly looking through the magazines, eventually found it, cut it out, put it on, and turned it over, and paused, and waited for the rest of the group to catch up. Well, in the end, she was offered to share, the whole group was offered to share. And in the end, she stood up, and the one word had four letters. And the four letters were F-R-E-E, free. And we wondered and thought, "Wow, so would you say a little more about that? Are you comfortable?" And here are some of the things, and I'm paraphrasing, some of the things that she offered, "I want to be free of the stigma of being poor.

I want to be free of a home that's not safe for my kids. I want to be free of a relationship that's abusive. I want my kids to be free of food stamps. I want to break free from financial stress. I want to be free from a job that doesn't pay me what I'm worth." You guys see where I'm going. You get to do this kind of incredible work and connection beside families every day. Now I'm proud of this. Would we have gotten that kind of deep, incredible, moving, powerful information if we had sat down with our forms and check marks and said, "What's your goal"? What do you guys think? I'm watching the chat. Let me see. South Carolina. It's externally powerful. No, certainly, we wouldn't have. So in that moment in time that we captured and offered the vehicle, the venue, an outside of the box process, we were able to learn and be moved. I was forever changed from that story, to hear that kind of power in that mamma's story changed, you know... And I've told everybody about it. Some of you on the line have heard it before. But you can see how that opportunity could create a space for families to really drain it [Inaudible] with us in a way that that's out of the box that creates a comfortable space for them to consider as they think meaningfully about what they might want to do.

Then, you know, you guys can determine whatever is comfortable for you in your process about how to transfer that depth into your, you know, documentation and whatever that might look like for you to track, you know, overcome, like, you know, Dr. Richard was alluding with those Seven Steps and everything. So we just wanted to offer a couple of different strategies that we've learned over the years from each other and to see if any of those resonated with you, so please feel free to add some more in chat. And I know some of you have. I can't to get back in there and see what you've been saying. But I think that we're going to get to transition here again, and I can't wait for you guys to hear from our next speaker. He is just wonderful. So let me hush so he can come in. Handing it over.

Anand: Thank you so much, Brandi and Dr. Richard. And just wanted to let folks know that, again, if you have specific questions about what you're hearing, please feel free to pose them to each other or to our presenters via the chat function. And we will try to hold a couple minutes at the end to try to address some of those while we're still on the air, but you can start sending those along as we go. So just to keep moving along, I wanted to introduce our third and final guest, and we're really excited to have Dr. Marvin Hogan who is the Executive Director of Friends of Children of Mississippi. Now Dr. Hogan is a native Mississippian, and for almost 50 years, he served in his position as the executive director. And he has really done a lot of work on behalf of children and families, but one reason we really wanted to have him come talk today is some specific work that he's done around goal setting and actually assisting families in achieving those goals around education and training. Some of you who have been with the BFEM webinar series from the beginning may remember Dr. Hogan. He was a guest in the early days of our webinars. And if you do remember him, you know why we're so thrilled to have him join us once again. So with that, please join me in welcoming Dr. Hogan. And, Dr. Hogan, it would be great to hear

just a little bit about your organization and specifically the work that you're doing around goal setting for education and training with families in your Head Start programs.

Dr. Marvin Hogan: Thank you, doc, and with a build-up like that, I guess I'll go to the world's fair. My name is Marvin Hogan. I'm the Executive Director of Friends of Children of Mississippi. We are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation operating in the state of Mississippi. This is our 51st year of operation after 18 months of no federal state money, and we started out without any money for the first 18 months, we are now 51 years old October 15th of this year. And we are very proud to be part of this webinar and participating with the group. After 51 years and 700 employees in 15 counties and have served 158,000 children, we are very happy. When we think of this idea of partnership, when we think of this idea of building relationships, we go back to 44 years ago when we realized that something was missing and we had to do something if we were going to survive and stay around. So we introduced a program that we didn't know all what we were doing, but we knew how we wanted to go about it so we started first trying to build a better relationship, so we asked all of our parents that came in if they would agree to sign what is called a compassionate partnership.

And that agreement established relationship, established trust, respect, and support for our families. And as a result of that initiative, we started out with this training program and we have trained 750 persons in the last 6 years. And of that number, 90% of them secured employment or started a business of their own, 187 parents and children we're involved, and also there were 820 persons that we have currently now in the waiting list. We were very excited about this because we found out that this family partnership would build a great desire on the part of families and not get families to think that they had to comply with something because they enrolled their children, it was a relationship, and we built that relationship by getting them to trust us and not to adhere to everything we say but to let them speak and we found it was a better way to go about it than we had been practicing before. I realized some of the things that doc was saying was outstanding, Dr. Richard was saying was just same as we had gotten along with and that is that showing families that you value what they do, showing them respect, and showing them that we will assist them and we stay with them, that's the first two things, the major things that they wanted to be concerned about is improving their education, and next, an economic spiral that they could go up the ladder.

So we surveyed a 45-mile radius and we know where all services were, we knew where all educational agencies were, and we let them set the tone. We didn't set the tone for them. They set the tone for themselves. And as a result of that, we are proud of the success number. We stayed with the participants after they finished their training for two years and then we assist them in getting, we don't use the word help, we stopped that years ago so we say assist, and we want parents to understand that we want them to do what they want to do. But we're going to assist in getting to the max and getting to the level that they really feel comfortable because we realize when children see their parents achieving success, they have a desire to achieve that type of success. That has been really rewarding for us.

And one of the last things I would say regarding to that is the fact that we asked the staff to make sure that they pay great attention to observation. It takes time to build a relationship, but it takes time to realize that you have to hush sometimes and let parents be. They may know more of you because they are your customers and an old cliché [Inaudible] we've used around here a long time, take care of the people, you take care of the customer, but first phrase, take care of the customer. And the parents are considered as our customers. We are very proud of that. And developing that compassion and

partnership, you can't rely on data all the time, you can't rely on the data all the time because some of the data that I've watched over the years does not have the answers of the parents, so we have to modify that in some respect.

Questions?

Anand: Thank you so much, Dr. Hogan. And I just want you to know that how appreciative we are of the work that you're doing in your community, in the many communities really that you're touching. And there's a lot of that kind of energy and positive support coming your way from our webinar participants who are really impressed just as we are with the work that you've done and just feel like a lot of the principles in the way that you conduct yourself and then your staff conduct themselves really resonates with them and I think is a nice illustration of some of the work that Dr. Richard and Brandi spoke about. And, you know, I would just say that I think that, you know, I really appreciated when Dr. Richard and Brandi were talking about allowing parents to talk about goals and maintaining the words in which parents speak about their goals and not inadvertently kind of crushing their dreams by saying, oh, you know, that's going to be too hard, like becoming a nurse is going to require, you know, steps A, B, and C before you can get there. And I also saw pairing that with a good set of information about what is available in your community.

And, Dr. Hogan, I know in your remarks and conversations we've had in the past that you have really tried hard to not crush anyone's dreams but let them know what is the local market in terms of, you know, jobs and types of education and training that might be useful for the jobs that are in the community but also doing a lot of work to help people to connect to job opportunities better elsewhere so that, you know, they know what they should be training and educating themselves for in terms of the types of opportunities that are nearby or even in neighboring areas. So definitely, you know, appreciate you sharing those thoughts and would just kind of pose a question to you, Dr. Hogan, as you're thinking about the work that some of your staff do working with families, are there any kind of key lessons for folks who are working directly with families about goal setting specifically around education and training because we know that a lot of people in our audience today are playing that role of a family services director or maybe even that, you know, direct contact with family themselves? Are there any lessons you have about how to approach those conversations around setting education and training goals, Dr Hogan?

Dr. Hogan: We learn and we try to teach the staff very quickly saying allow people to dream and allow people to realize that they can be what they want to be if they just continue to have that desire, and you assist them in setting the goals, and like I said, we know where resources are within a 45-mile radius of every site that we are located. And that's three areas, so we know. So even with that, we tell them, "You may need to look at something a little different but don't stop believing in yourself and don't stop realizing that we're going to assist you and we're going to take you there, we're going to stick with you for two years. And think about it, now. We found out that's something a lot of people are afraid of. They think that once they get trained or get skilled that they can walk out on their own. We're not saying you have to be nurtured by us, but we want to nurture you so that you know that you have someone to rely on for at least two years, and you start your IDAs after you get two years and we match every dollar for dollar for the first 500, 2 to 1 the second 500, 3 to 1 up to \$1000, and we want to let you know that we're going to be with you. And as a result of that, we've had that kind of success. So we got 40-some

people in business now, but we have to take them outside of the area because there wasn't anything in the area.

Anand: Thank you, Dr. Hogan. And we're getting comments of your talk. And I think a lot of this is resonating with folks. So, you know, I think your intentions and choice of words around assist versus help, some folks are understanding where you're coming from and really understanding why you and your organization decided to make that change in language because, you know, words do matter, and, you know, we appreciate you sharing your thoughts on that. There is a question that came in, Dr. Hogan, about some of the details around training. So the question is what kind of training did families receive or, you know, parents receive to equip them to enter into the workforce or college or, you know, start a business of their own? Could you say a little bit more about what kind of training helps them to achieve those goals?

Dr. Hogan: [Inaudible], nurse assistant, cement finish, dry wall, tile, and we also have child development, and also, we are teaching now cement finish. And that is one of the big areas that we're working on.

Anand: Thank you, Dr. Hogan. I'm aware of the time and want to make sure that we get through the rest of our content here. So if you do have a couple more questions, please share them, we'll try our best to see if we can fit them in. Otherwise, if you are able to stick around from 4:00 to 4:15, we'll try to answer some of them via chat. But I did want to turn things back over to Dr. Richard and Brandi to share just a couple final insights for all of you related to goal setting for the staff that are, you know, in Head Start and Early Head Start programs who are doing this kind of work. So I'll turn it back over to Dr. Richard and Brandi. Dr.

Hogan: Doc, may I say a comment right there? One of the things I'd like to pass on to everyone, don't give up hope when you're trying to get assistance to assist your program. It took us two years, but we finally were able to get several organizations to assist us, and as a result of that, we were able to secure two buses and we're transporting workers now out of the area into another area because that area does not provide employment.

Anand: Thank you, Dr. Hogan.

Dr. Richard: Thank you so much, Dr. Hogan. It was like really, you know, really a delight to hear a lot of the things that you shared with us and resonating, so we will try now to kind of getting a summary of the key insights that we would like you to go away with. One of the things that, as Dr. Hogan said, you know, the trust that we're building with families, we know that is very necessary. So in the process of family partnership, in the family partnership process and goal setting with families because without trust the person will not share their dreams, their hope, and, you know, their fear even of going into something that they might themselves think is not attainable. But you know without the right partner beside you, you cannot complete. So trust is very important for you to -- Before you start, you know, going into the process of goal setting, let the family know that you're there with them and you will continue being there with them. The second one that we want to you know and, you know, that we want to allow the families to articulate their own goal.

As you heard it from us and you heard it from Dr. Hogan and you will continue hearing it to the families. The families want you to let them dream, let them hope, and let them tell you. And a lot of time, we usually go ahead and look up, as Dr. Hogan said, into data, but, you know, the data is simply sometimes

found in the stories that those families share with you. Those stories, when Brandi was talking about that family saying like, you know, all I want in my vision boarding is free. Look at what the word free carried with it. So if you can just really sit down and listen and let them articulate, this is what she wanted, she wanted to be free, but this is through that trust that she had received that she was able to articulate that, you know, my goal was to be free of debt, free of everything else that you know. And the thing that I would go ahead, you know, is also the important understanding, in partnership, there is vulnerability. So when you're partnering with families, please do know about it. The reason I'm saying that is because sometimes we feel that because I'm a family service staff and the family does not share something with me and has gun fired things up to the teacher. And talk to the teacher, and I take that's personal. This is not the play.

This is not the place for us to understand that, you know, people don't like -- The person maybe a little bit like, you know, shy or not warming up yet to you or not trusting yet, but the level of trust that they have with another staff may be greater, so it's okay, it's okay. Remember, this is a team effort, the family partnership process and family partnership agreement doesn't have to be you and the family only as the family service staff, it can include other people that know a little bit more about the story. So be vulnerable and let it be. Don't take anything personal. As a matter of fact, reach out, let somebody crack the door open to you with that family. And it's okay, don't feel that you know, oh, this is because the family does not like me. So just stay away from those emotions and just, you know, let see, "Okay, who else in the program can support this family to really open up?" And, you know, as Dr. Hogan said, be a good listener. Being vulnerable means that, you know, I will just say that I don't know, I don't know this, and I would feel comfortable in letting my partner know that I can find a resource, I can find a report, but I am willing to tell you that I don't have it all here, and I am there with you, and we'll find somebody else. And I would like to know, Brandi, do you, you know, I think I will... If you don't mind, we will talk about -- I will let you talk to us about the community, the engagement part that we can have when we are entertaining other people in our program.

Brandi: Yeah, and my mind is just swirling with all the great things that are happening in the chat, and there are so many things to connect to here, I mean, that you've already offered, you know, around the trust piece and the connection to some energy that happened in chat around words matter in the way we choose our words. And the exact words that we choose either instill, a belief in a family or they don't. And families, of course have all of this just like the little kids, they know right away if we're connected in genuine or if we're not. And so our inner actions have to be so grounded in that strength-based approach with very intentional choices about language and tone. There are so many exciting things happening. So the support outside your program, there are so many ways to, of course, as we all know, make connections to and with. Our community is a huge part of what we do. It's a huge piece of what sets Head Start and Early Head Start apart from other entities that walk beside the families, but certainly, we want to make sure that our families don't have to be overwhelmed when they're navigating all those systems. And we want to make that a seamless streamline process. And actually, you guys remember, I mean, we're charged to make sure that we don't replicate on top of other things that families might already be doing in other social service entities. Like one of the things that comes to mind is, for instance, if there's a treatment plan already in place, where a family might have a goal set forth under that kind of umbrella, I know this topic we're talking about today in service of goal setting is around education, but certainly, we need to partner with the family to see if they have any other goals with other outside agencies or organizations.

But in service of supporting the families and making sure we have the most current information about everything that's out there, about their hours, about their current phone numbers, their websites, new programs, you guys know we're the hub. We need to be the ones that are reaching out, and if we're not at the table, we weasel our way into the table or up to the table I guess will be the better way to say it. And this is nothing new for how we do what we do. But it's a great reminder to be grounded there as we think about how that relates to goal settings because ultimately there are other ways to sort of, you know, make the best use of our valuable time along with our community partners not only in the way of communication and referrals but sometimes tracking, sometimes modeling, sometimes documentation of progress because certainly when our families believe our partnership and their little ones get, you know, grown and old enough to go to kindergarten, we still like to keep in touch. And sometimes there are opportunities to do that if we're very grounded in relationship, as we love to be, with our community partners too. So I'm going to pause there, so very confirming, I hope, to all of you in the insights [Inaudible] work that's already happening.

Anand: Thank you, Brandi. And I'm looking at the clock, and we're unfortunately at time, so I do apologize if there were questions that you asked that we didn't quite get to. I will just remind you that, like, the end of a movie where the credits are rolling, but then there's this extra scene at the end of the movie, we do have a bonus which is if you can stick around from 4:00 to 4:15, we will cut off the audio but we will be trying to point you to resources and feel some questions via chat. So do stick around if you're interested in that. Too quick announcements and I promise we will wrap this up. If you haven't already, join now, the MyPeers Economic Mobility Learning Community. It's a great place to find additional resources and engaging conversations between these BFEM webinars and having a lot of other important conversations related to Head Start and Early Head Start. So I won't go through all the directions, many of you are already members. But if you're not, please consider joining today. And the last thing I wanted to mention is save the date for our next Building Foundations on Economic Mobility webinar which will pair nicely with today's goal setting conversation. This one is focused on helping parents finance their education goals.

So once you go through that process of assisting families and figuring out what it is that they want to achieve in terms of education and training, we know that one of the biggest barriers, although not the only one, is financial considerations and making sure that you can pay for that education and training in a way that makes sense for that family and allows them to continue on that path toward economic mobility in a financially stable way. So please stay tuned. We'll get the exact date out to you soon, but that will be coming this fall. And if you're new to the BFEM network or it's been a while since you've seen some of our old content, do check out the archive on the ECLKC website, and you can see a link right there. You can see past appearances from Brandi and folks like Dr. Hogan and catch up on anything you may have missed. It's a great place to see the actual webinars, to see handouts and slides, and the content for this webinar in the next couple weeks will end up being posted there as well. So thank you so much. We went a little over, and I do appreciate you hanging out with us, and just want to say thank you so much for being here, for the work that you do with families, and for being such an engaged audience. We'll be cutting off the audio now, but please stick around if you want to continue chatting with us and your colleagues. Have a wonderful afternoon.

Dr. Hogan: I want to say one thing. If you want something you've never had, you must do something you've never done.

Brandi: Dr. Hogan.

Anand: I couldn't have ended it better myself, Dr. Hogan. Thank you so much. And thank you to Dr, Hogan, Dr. Richard, and Brandi, and our whole team behind the scenes.

Thank you.